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SUBJECT: UN BUDGET: GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON
RENOVATION OF SECRETARY-GENERAL'S RESIDENCE

REF: USUN 2039

¶1. SUMMARY: On November 28, the Plenary adopted a resolution on the "Renovation to the residence of the Secretary-General" (A/C.5/61/L.8) after the Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution on November 22. Member States were able to reach agreement on endorsing the recommendations and observations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), thereby stressing the need to adhere strictly to the time schedule for the work and for the full cost of the renovation to be absorbed within the existing appropriation. The resolution also regrets that this proposal was not included in the proposed program budget for the biennium 2006-2007, authorizes the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of 4,490,400 dollars and to report on expenditures in the context of the second performance report.

The resolution was adopted ahead of other Fifth Committee resolutions in order to allow the renovation to proceed expeditiously. END SUMMARY.

¶2. After the adoption of the draft resolution in the Fifth Committee, South Africa (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Finland (on behalf of the European Union) and the U.S. (see para 4) made statements in explanation of position.

South Africa said the renovation of the Secretary-General's residence should have been addressed sooner to avoid cost escalations and ensure the Secretary-General and his family lived comfortably and safely. The G77 joined the consensus on the text after receiving assurances from the Secretariat that absorbing the cost of the project (which was recommended by the ACABQ) would not lead to delays in projects the Assembly approved under Section 32 of the 2006-2007 programme budget. The G77 had also been assured that expenditures would be reported in the second performance report. South Africa also said the G77 expected every effort would be made to conclude negotiations with the host country on the fourth supplemental headquarters agreement.

¶3. Finland (on behalf of the EU) welcomed adoption of the resolution and trusted every effort would be made to absorb the full cost of the renovation and security upgrade within the approved appropriations for the 2006-2007 program budget.

The EU looked forward to returning to the issue in the context of the second performance report for the current biennium.

¶4. The U.S. delivered the following explanation of position:

BEGIN TEXT.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As my delegation has previously stated, we are concerned by the current conditions of the Secretary-General's residence and therefore support the proposal to renovate his residence.

We are pleased that the Committee has been able to reach agreement on this matter, allowing the renovation to move forward expeditiously. We note that the draft resolution

before us today endorses the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which we support. We understand that by endorsing these observations and recommendations, the General Assembly stresses the need to adhere strictly to the time schedule for the work and for the full cost of this renovation to be absorbed within the existing appropriation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

END TEXT.
BOLTON